

5AANB004 Modern II Spinoza & Leibniz

Course title **Modern II Spinoza and Leibniz**
Course code **5AANB004**
Value **15 Credits**
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Graduate teaching assistants:

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Aims and learning outcomes

Aims

To introduce students to the views and methods of inquiry prominent in Spinoza and Leibniz's philosophies, providing them with a presentation of issues of permanent philosophical importance within a historical context.

Learning outcomes

Generic skills

By the end of the course the student will be able to demonstrate an ability:-
to analyse texts and arguments;
to summarise and present arguments;
to research, plan and present essays to specified deadlines.

Course specific skills

Knowledge and Understanding of:-

- major themes and topics in the history of modern philosophy
- their relation to and bearing upon later, including current, investigation and debate
- two key figures in this tradition.

Module description

This course will develop students' familiarity with modern philosophy through an examination of the thought of Spinoza and Leibniz. Students will be introduced to the central metaphysical, epistemological, and moral claims of each philosopher, through a reading of primary texts. They will develop an appreciation of the historical context within which the thought of Spinoza and Leibniz developed. The course will examine the similarities and differences between these two crucial thinkers in the modern period, and will set out their approaches to topics such as the

nature of substance, knowledge, morality, and the relationship between faith and reason.

Teaching arrangements

This level 5 module is taught in Semester II with 1 hour weekly lectures and 1 hour weekly seminars.

Teaching Plan

- Introduction: the category ‘rationalism’

Spinoza

- Introduction
- Theory of Substance
- Theory of Knowledge
- Moral Philosophy
- Faith and Philosophy

Leibniz

- Introduction
- Theory of Substance
- Theory of Knowledge
- Moral Philosophy
- Faith and Reason

Seminars: weekly meetings for 10 weeks (excluding reading week)

Seminars: Reading

Spinoza

- 1) *Ethics*, Part I: Definitions 1-8; Axioms 1-7; Propositions 1-15 (including Demonstrations, Scholia, and Corollaries).

- 2) *Ethics*, Part I: Propositions 16-36 (including Demonstrations, Scholia, and Corollaries) and Appendix.
- 3) *Ethics*, Part II: Scholium II to Proposition 40; Propositions 40-47 (including Demonstrations, Scholia, and Corollaries); Part V, Proposition 25 -- *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect*, pp. 7-19, in *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. I; pp. 3-14, in *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, translated by R.H.L. Elwes, vol. II.
- 4) *Ethics*, Part III: Propositions 1, 3, 6-7, 9, 11 (including Demonstrations, Scholia, and Corollaries); Part IV: Preface, Definitions 1-2, Propositions 3, 18, 24, 28, 67 (including Demonstrations, Scholia, and Corollaries); Part V: Preface, Propositions 20, 23, 29-30, 33, 40 (including Demonstrations, Scholia, and Corollaries).
- 5) *Theological-Political Treatise*, chapters 6, 14, and 15.

Leibniz

- 1) *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686)
In G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Texts*, trans. and edited by R. S. Woolhouse and R. Francks, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1998; G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, ed. by Roger Ariew and Daniel Garber, Indianapolis, 1989, pp. 35-68.
- 2) *New System of the Nature of Substances and their Communication* (1695)
In Leibniz, *Philosophical Texts*, trans. and edited by R. S. Woolhouse and R. Francks; *Leibniz's 'New System'*, trans. and edited by R. S. Woolhouse and R. Francks, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1997.

Monadology (1714).

In: Leibniz, *Philosophical Texts*, trans. and edited by R. S. Woolhouse and R. Francks; G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Writings*, edited by G.H.R. Parkinson; G. W. Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, edited by L.E. Loemker; Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, ed. by Ariew and Garber, pp. 213-25 .

- 3) *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas* (1684).
In Leibniz, *Philosophical Essays*, ed. by Ariew and Garber, pp. 23-7; Leibniz, *Philosophical Papers and Letters*, trans. and ed. by Leroy E Loemker, second edition, Dordrecht and Boston: Reidel, 1969, pp. 291-295.

New Essays (1703-5)

Preface; Book I, Chap. 1, § 1; Chap. 3, § 20; Book II, Chap. 11, § 17. Ed. and trans. by Peter Remnant and Jonathan Bennett. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981.

- 4) *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice* (1703) and *Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf* (1706)

In G. W. Leibniz, *Political Writings*. Trans. and ed. with an introduction by Patrick Riley. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1972.

- 5) 'Preliminary discourse on the conformity of faith with reason', *Theodicy* (1710) Trans. by E. M. Huggard. LaSalle, Ill.: Open Court, 1985.

Assessment

The assessment consists of two parts:

1. Summative assessment: 1 x 2-hour exam in May/June (Period II).
2. Formative assessment: 2 x 1,500-word essays, to be submitted to your GTA.

1. Exam:

The course will be assessed through one 2-hour unseen written examination (100% of final grade). Two questions must be answered, one from section A (on Spinoza or on a comparison between Spinoza and Leibniz) and one from section B (on Leibniz or on a comparison between Spinoza and Leibniz).

2. Formative Essays:

The mark does not count toward the final grade. Formative essays must be completed by the deadline in order to receive feedback. This feedback is crucial for your summative assessment. Extensions can be granted only by the course convenor, Professor Antognazza, and only in exceptional circumstances (e.g. illness). If you need an extension present your reasons to your GTA who will contact Professor Antognazza.

First Essay (1500 words) to be emailed to your GTA by 16.00 on Friday 20 February 2015.

Spinoza

1. “By God I understand a being absolutely infinite, i.e., a substance consisting of an infinity of attributes, of which each one expresses an eternal and infinite essence.” Spinoza, *Ethics*. Discuss.
2. Expound and assess Spinoza’s conception of freedom.
3. Assess Spinoza’s account of the kind of knowledge which “proceeds from an adequate idea of the formal essence of certain attributes of God to the adequate knowledge of the essence of things.”
4. “We neither strive for, nor will, neither want, nor desire anything because we judge it to be good; on the contrary, we judge something to be good because we strive for it, will it, want it, and desire it.” Spinoza, *Ethics*. Discuss.
5. According to Spinoza, what is the relationship between faith and philosophy?

6. Expound and assess Spinoza's rejection of miracles.

Second Essay (1500 words) to be emailed to your GTA by 16.00 on Friday 03 April 2015.

Leibniz

7. "Body is not self-sufficient and cannot subsist without an incorporeal principle." Leibniz, *The Confession of nature against atheists*. Discuss.

8. Discuss some of the consequences of Leibniz's conception of truth as inclusion of the predicate in the subject of a proposition.

9. "There must be simple substances, because there are compounds; for the compound is nothing but a collection or *aggregatum* of simples." Leibniz, *Monadology*. Discuss

10. Expound and assess Leibniz's doctrine of ideas.

11. "Justice ... would not be an essential attribute of God, if he himself established justice and law by his free will." Leibniz, *Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf*. Discuss.

12. Does Leibniz present a convincing case for the distinction between 'above reason' and 'contrary to reason'?

Bibliography

PRIMARY SOURCES

Selected passages from the following primary sources will be discussed during lectures and seminars. Any edition, either in the original language or in translation, can be used. See below indication of recommended and / or readily available editions and translations.

Spinoza

Standard edition (original language): B. Spinoza, *Opera*. Edited by Carl Gebhardt. 5 volumes. Heidelberg: Carl Winters, 1925, 1972 [volume 5, 1987]. A new critical edition is in preparation by the Groupe de recherches spinoziste.

B. Spinoza, *Ethics* (1677)

In *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. I. Ed. and trans. E.M. Curley. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1985.

Edited and translated by G.H.R. Parkinson. Oxford: OUP 2000.

In *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, translated by R.H.L. Elwes, vol. II.

B. Spinoza, *Treatise on the Emendation of the Intellect* (c. 1661-62)

In *The Collected Works of Spinoza*, vol. I. Ed. and trans. E.M. Curley. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton UP, 1985.

In *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, translated by R.H.L. Elwes, vol. II.

B. Spinoza, *Theologico-Political Treatise* (1670)

Edited by Jonathan Israel; translated by Michael Silverthorne and Jonathan Israel. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 2007.

Translated by Samuel Shirley. Second edition. Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 2001.
In *The Chief Works of Benedict de Spinoza*, translated by R.H.L. Elwes, vol. I.

Leibniz

On-going critical edition (original languages): Leibniz, G. W. *Sämtliche Schriften und Briefe*. Ed. by the Academy of Sciences of Berlin. Series I–VIII. Darmstadt, Leipzig, and Berlin, 1923 ff.

Main edition of philosophical writings (original languages): *Die Philosophischen Schriften*. Ed. by C. I. Gerhardt. 7 vols. Berlin: Weidmannsche Buchhandlung, 1875–90. Reprint, Hildesheim: Olms, 1960–61.

For editions/translations see above ‘**Seminars: Reading**’

G. W. Leibniz, *Discourse on Metaphysics* (1686)

G. W. Leibniz, *New System of the Nature of Substances and their Communication* (1695)

G. W. Leibniz, *Monadology* (1714)

G. W. Leibniz, *Meditations on Knowledge, Truth, and Ideas* (1684)

G. W. Leibniz, *New Essays on Human Understanding* (1703-1705)

G. W. Leibniz, *Meditation on the Common Concept of Justice* (c. 1702-3)

G. W. Leibniz, *Opinion on the Principles of Pufendorf* (1706)

G. W. Leibniz, *Theodicy* (1710)

Introductions

***The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza*, Cambridge: CUP, 1996 – esp. chapters on metaphysics, theory of knowledge, ethical theory, and theology.**

***The Cambridge Companion to Leibniz*, Cambridge: CUP, 1995 -- esp. chapters on metaphysics, theory of knowledge, philosophy and logic (including Leibniz's theory of truth), physics and philosophy, and moral philosophy.**

Entries on Spinoza and Leibniz in a good philosophical Encyclopedia or Dictionary: e.g. the **Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy**, <http://plato.stanford.edu/> (very good main entries on Spinoza by S. Nadler and on Leibniz by B. Look; in addition there are very helpful related entries on specific aspects of Spinoza and Leibniz's philosophies) or *Routledge Encyclopedia of Philosophy* (available on line: see University of London databases).

Cottingham, John. *The Rationalists*, Oxford: OUP, 1988.

Phemister, Pauline. *The Rationalists*, Cambridge: Polity, 2006.

Routledge history of philosophy, vol IV: *The Renaissance and Seventeenth-century Rationalism*, chaps on Spinoza and Leibniz.

Della Rocca, Michael. *Spinoza*, London and New York: Routledge, 2008.

Allison, Henry. *Benedict de Spinoza: An Introduction*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987.

Nadler, Steven. *Spinoza's Ethics: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006.

The Cambridge Companion to Spinoza's Ethics. Ed. by Olli Koistinen. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press: 2009.

The Continuum Companion to Spinoza. Ed. by Wiep van Bunge et al. Continuum. 2011.

The Continuum Companion to Leibniz. Ed. by Brandon Look. Continuum. 2011.

Jolley, Nicholas. *Leibniz*, London: Routledge, 2005.

MacDonald Ross, G. *Leibniz*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984.

Perkins, Franklin. *Leibniz: a guide for the perplexed*, London: Continuum, 2007.

Arthur, T. W. Richard. *Leibniz*. Polity Press, 2014 (this introduction is particularly suited to those with an interest in philosophy of mathematics and / or philosophy of physics).

Mates, B. *The Philosophy of Leibniz*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986, chap. II 'The System in Outline'.

Savile, Anthony. *Routledge Philosophy Guidebook to Leibniz and the Monadology*. London: Routledge, 2000.

Woolhouse, R.S. *Descartes, Spinoza, Leibniz. The concept of substance in seventeenth-century metaphysics*, London: Routledge, 1993, especially chaps 3 ('Spinoza and Substance'), 4 ('Leibniz and Substance'), 9 ('Extended Substance and Thinking Substance related'), and 10 ('Uncreated and Created Substance: God and the World').

Further Reading

Nadler, Steven. *Spinoza: A Life*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999.

Donagan, Alan. *Spinoza*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988.

Curley, E., *Behind the geometrical method: a reading of Spinoza's Ethics*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1988.

Bennett, Jonathan. *A Study of Spinoza's Ethics*, Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing, 1984.

Parkinson, G.H.R. *Spinoza's Theory of Knowledge*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1954.

Joachim, H.H. *Spinoza's Tractatus de Intellectus Emendatione*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1940.

James, Susan. *Spinoza on Philosophy, Religion, and Politics: The Theologico-Political Treatise*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press, 2012.

Verbeek, Theo. *Spinoza's Theologico-Political Treatise: Exploring 'the Will of God'*, London: Ashgate, 2003.

Antognazza, M. R., *Leibniz: An Intellectual Biography*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009.

Adams, Robert M. *Leibniz: Determinist, Theist, Idealist*. Oxford – New York: Oxford University Press, 1994.

Garber, Daniel. *Leibniz: Body, Substance, Monad*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.

Jolley, N. *Leibniz and Locke*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1984, esp. chap 9 'Knowledge and Ideas'.

Jolley, N. *The light of the soul: theories of ideas in Leibniz, Malebranche, and Descartes*, Oxford: Clarendon, 1990, esp. chap. 9 'Leibniz: The Defence of Innate Ideas'.

Bolton, Martha. 'Leibniz and Locke on the knowledge of necessary truths'. *Central Themes in early modern philosophy : Essays presented to Jonathan Bennett*. Ed. by Jan Arthur Cover and Mark Kulstad. Indianapolis [u.a.]: Hackett, 1990.

McRae, R. *Leibniz: Perception, Apperception, and Thought*, Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1976, chap 4 'Thought' (especially pp. 71-78; 93-103).

Tipton, I. (ed.), *Locke on Human Understanding*, Oxford: OUP, 1977, chap 2 'Leibniz and Locke on innate ideas'.

Rutherford, Donald. *Leibniz and the Rational Order of Nature*. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995.

Riley, P. 'Leibniz's Méditation sur la notion commune de la justice' *The Leibniz Review* 13 (2003): 67-78.

Riley, P. *Leibniz' universal jurisprudence: justice as the charity of the wise*. Cambridge, Mass. [u.a.]: Harvard Univ. Press, 1996.

Antognazza, M. R. 'The Conformity of Faith with Reason in the "Discours Préliminaire" of the *Theodicy*'. In *Lectures et interprétations des Essais de théodicée de G. W. Leibniz*. Ed. by Paul Rateau [Studia Leibnitiana Sonderhefte 40]. Stuttgart: Steiner, 2011, pp. 231-245.

Antognazza, M. R. 'The Defence of the Mysteries of the Trinity and the Incarnation: an Example of Leibniz's "Other" Reason'. *British Journal for the History of Philosophy*, 9/2 (2001), 283-309.

Antognazza, M. R. *Leibniz on the Trinity and the Incarnation: Reason and Revelation in the Seventeenth Century*, New Haven: Yale University Press, 2008.

Antognazza, M. R. 'Natural and Supernatural Mysteries: Leibniz's *Annotatiunculæ subitaneæ* on Toland's *Christianity not Mysterior*'. *Nihil sine Ratione. Mensch, Natur und Technik im Wirken von G. W. Leibniz. VII. Internationaler Leibniz-Kongress*. Edited by H. Poser. Vols I-III. Berlin: Leibniz-Gesellschaft, 2001. Vol I, pp. 17-24.

Dascal, M. 'Reason and the Mysteries of Faith: Leibniz on the Meaning of Religious Discourse', in M. Dascal, *Leibniz. Language, Signs and Thought*, Benjamins, Amsterdam-Philadelphia 1987, pp. 93-124.

Goldenbaum, U. "Spinoza's Parrot, Socinian Syllogism, and Leibniz's Metaphysics: Leibniz's Three Strategies of Defending Christian Mysteries." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76, no 4 (2002): 551-574.

Lodge, P. and B. Crowe, "Leibniz, Bayle, and Locke on Faith and Reason." *American Catholic Philosophical Quarterly* 76, no 4 (2002): 575-600.

ONLINE resources

Very useful Library page:

Philosophy Library Subject Guide

<http://libguides.kcl.ac.uk/phil>

Other useful links to online resources are accessible via the **Links** area of the **Student Handbook**; Philosophy dept webpage:

<http://www.kcl.ac.uk/artshums/depts/philosophy/study/handbook/links.aspx>

Some Internet Resources on Spinoza and Leibniz

- [Necessarily Eternal: A Catablog of \(All\) Things Spinoza](#)
- <http://www.gwleibniz.com/>
- www.leibniz-bibliographie.de
- <http://www.3ammagazine.com/3am/leibniz-strange-monods-esoteric-existentialism-and-love/> (light-hearted interview on Leibniz)